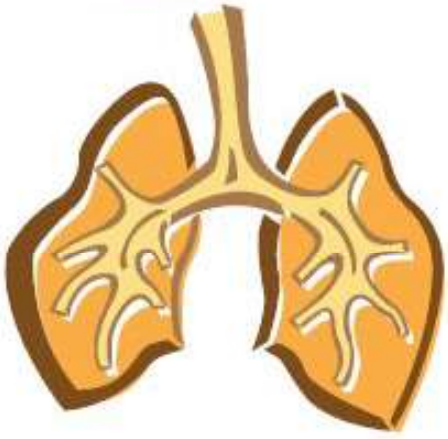
Charing Cross Hospital

What does your doctor mean?
A key to difficult medical words

A Lung Glossary



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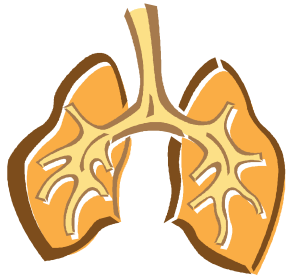

This booklet contains a short list of symptoms, disease names, investigations and treatments which may be relevant to those attending a chest clinic.

Glossary

A list of terms sometimes used by doctors when discussing lung disease

We hope this booklet will help you understand the words your doctor uses in his letter to your GP.

We also enclose a list of useful web addresses which provide more information about certain lung conditions.

6. Smoking

- NHS Giving Up Smoking - www.givingupsmoking.co.uk
- QUIT www.quit.org.uk -
- Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) - www.ash.org.uk

7. Tuberculosis

- The Health Protection Agency - www.hpa.org.uk
- TB Alert - www.tbalert.org
- Stop TB - www.stoptb.org

8. Other Lung Conditions

- Alpha 1 Antitrypsin Deficiency www.alpha1.org.uk/Alpha1
- The National Eczema Society www.eczema.org
- LAM (Lymphangioleiomyomatosis) Action www.lamaction.org
- Occupational and Environmental Disease Association www.oedademon.co.uk
- Pulmonary Hypertension Association www.pha-uk.com
- Respiratory Muscle Weakness www.respiratorymuscle.co.uk
- Sarcoidosis and Interstitial Lung Associaton (SILA) www.sarcoidosis.org.uk

A

ACE inhibitor: A type of medicine used to treat raised blood pressure or heart failure. The use of the medicine can be complicated by the side effect of coughing in a small proportion of users.

Acid Fast Bacilli: In cases of lung tuberculosis, early suspicion of the diagnosis can be obtained by staining sputum samples in a special way that demonstrate the presence of an organism, a bacillus, which is very suggestive of the diagnosis of tuberculosis (TB).

Actigraphy: A special type of test, often performed over a month, where sleep – wake patterns are monitored by wearing a special watch at home.

Adenocarcinoma: A type of cancer which can arise in the lung, bowel, breast or prostate gland.

Alpha 1 Antitrypsin deficiency: an inherited condition which predisposes one to the development of COPD and emphysema at an earlier age than one would normally expect. Less commonly it is associated with a predisposition to bronchiectasis and it may also be associated with some forms of liver disease. The condition can be excluded by a simple blood test.

Alveolar Cell Carcinoma (broncho-alveolar cell carcinoma): A rare type of lung cancer which differs from other lung cancers in that it is usually patchily distributed throughout a lobe of the lung instead of being a solid mass.

Angiotensin Converting Enzyme (ACE): A blood test which is usually abnormally high in cases of sarcoidosis or tuberculosis.

Anti-TB medication: Medicines which are used to treat tuberculosis. This usually involves several different types of medicines taken for a minimum of six months.

Apnoea: Stopping breathing

Asbestos: is a mineral dust or fibre which was widely used in the building trade and on board ships because of its insulating and fire-resistant properties. The breathing in of asbestos fibres can result in:

- Pleural plaques, which are a minor scarring of the lining of the lung visible on a chest x-ray
- Asbestosis, which is a scarring of the lung itself which causes a loss of volume in the lung and can give rise to symptoms of coughing and breathlessness
- Mesothelioma, which is a tumour of the lining of the lung (separate leaflet available in the clinic).

Asthma: a condition of the airways of the lung which is associated with coughing, feelings of breathlessness and chest tightness, all of which may be worse during the night. Special leaflets are available on this condition and there is a recommended website (see website and separate leaflet available in the clinic).

Atelectasis – a collapse of a small portion of the lung.

Atopy/Atopic : A predisposition to become allergic or to develop allergic diseases such as asthma, hay fever or eczema.

Atrovent: The trade name of a medicine known as "Ipratropium" which is used from an inhaler in the treatment, usually, of COPD.

Auto-titrating machine: A type of **CPAP** machine which delivers variable pressures over the night to treat **OSAS.**

Azathioprine: A medicine usually used with steroids which permits a smaller dose of steroid tablets to be used in the treatment of inflammatory lung conditions (a separate leaflet exists on
this medication).

B

BD: Latin terminology which means that a medicine should be taken twice daily.

Beclomethasone: An inhaled steroid.

Biopsy: The sampling of body tissues. Thus "lung biopsy" means the obtaining of tissue from part of the lung to look at under a microscope. A biopsy may be obtained by a surgeon or by an x-ray doctor using a needle, or for example, via a telescope such as during bronchoscopy.

BMI (Body Mass Index): A method of quantifying somebody's weight which relates weight to height.

Bronchiectasis: A condition where the airways in the lung become damaged and dilated. It may follow childhood whooping cough, or measles and pneumonia, or develop in later life. Symptoms of bronchiectasis are usually those of a cough productive of sputum and a tendency to infections. Special leaflets are available on this condition.

Bronchodilator: A medicine which opens the airways. This may be taken from an inhaler or by tablets.

Specific Lung Diseases

The following websites are dedicated to specific lung diseases. These sites offer information and support to people with the disease, and many have information on current research into the conditions. You will also find useful information about these conditions on the websites listed on the opposite page.

1. Asthma

- Asthma UK - www.asthma.org.uk
- Allergy UK - www.allergyuk.org
- Health and Safety Executive - www.hse.gov.uk/asthma

2. Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease

- COPD International - www.copdinternational.com

3. Cystic Fibrosis

- The Cystic Fibrosis Trust UK - www.cftrust.org.uk
- The UK CF Gene Therapy Consortium - www.cfgenetherapy.org.uk

4. Lung Cancer

- Cancer Research UK - www.cancerresearchuk.org
- CancerBACUP - www.cancerbacup.org.uk
- Roy Castle Lung Cancer Foundation - www.roycastle.org

5. Sleep Apnoea

- The British Snoring and Sleep Apnoea Association - www.britishsnoring.co.uk
- The Sleep Apnoea Trust - www.sleep-apnoea-trust.org
- The Sleep Council - www.sleepcouncil.com

Useful Web Addresses

General Information on Lung Diseases

The following websites contain information about many different lung conditions and are an excellent place to start if you are looking for more information about your condition or about a procedure that you are going to have.

1. **The British Lung Foundation - www.lunguk.org**
   This UK Charity has an excellent website that provides useful information about almost every lung condition, and offers support to those with lung disease and their carers.

2. **NHS Direct Online - www.nhsdirect.nhs.co.uk**
   A comprehensive website with information on many aspects of health, including a health encyclopaedia, best treatment guide and self-help guide.

3. **BBC Health Online - www.bbc.co.uk/health**
   This website provides well-presented information on a wide range of lung disorders, and on other health-related topics.

4. **Patient UK - www.patient.co.uk**
   This very useful website provides comprehensive leaflets on a wide range of lung conditions, treatments and procedures. Also provides a list of useful patient groups & organisations.

6. **The Department of Health - www.doh.gov.uk**
   This government website provides health and social care policy, guidance and publications.

7. **MedicAlert Foundation - www.medicalert.org.uk**
   This website provides information on how to obtain MedicAlert bracelets.

Broncho-pulmonary aspergillosis (BPA): sometimes also known as allergic broncho -pulmonary aspergillosis (ABPA): An extreme form of allergy or hypersensitivity to the presence of the fungus aspergillus which is associated with episodes of fever, increased breathlessness and chest discomfort which is accompanied by patchy shadowing seen on the chest xray. The condition can be a complication or an accompaniment of severe asthma.

Bronchoscopy, or fibreoptic bronchoscopy (FOB): An investigation whereby a thin flexible tube telescope is passed into the lungs so that the airways can be inspected and samples collected. A special leaflet is available on this investigation.

Broncho-alveolar lavage (BAL): The obtaining of cells from the lung for examination during bronchoscopy. A small quantity of fluid is passed into the lung via the bronchoscope and then quickly sucked out and examined by cytology doctors in the laboratory.

Budesonide: An inhaled steroid.

C

Catarrh: Secretions, usually originating in the nose or sinuses which drip into the back of the throat.

Cavity (cavitating) Lesion: An abnormal hole in the lung – normally because a more solid mass has broken down in the centre and part of the mass has been coughed up.

Chemoprophylaxis: A term usually used to mean the use of anti-TB medication to prevent that disease occurring.

Chest Radiograph: A chest x-ray.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD): previously, often referred to as chronic bronchitis or emphysema or airflow limitation, this is a condition associated with generalised narrowing of the airways usually associated with cigarette smoking. Special leaflets are available on this condition and there is a recommended website.

Churg Strauss Syndrome: A rare inflammation of small blood vessels resulting in possible damage to skin, nerves and heart and occurring more often in people with asthma.

Clubbing: see Finger Clubbing

Combination inhaler: Usually referring to the combination in the same inhaler of an inhaled steroid and a long acting airway opening medication.

Cor pulmonale: Failing of the pumping action of the right side of the heart as a result of lung disease which has caused the pressure in the pulmonary arteries to rise.

CPAP (Continuous Positive Airway Pressure): A therapy that helps to prevents **OSAS** by blowing air into the airway via a nose or full face mask. It is very effective at helping to reduce the excessive daytime tiredness suffered by those with **OSAS**. A separate leaflet is available on this treatment and there is a recommended website.

CRP (C-reactive protein): A blood test which when abnormally raised is suggestive of the presence of inflammation.

CTPA (Computerised tomographic pulmonary angiogram): A special form of CT scanning of the lung which outlines the blood vessels and which is undertaken in cases of suspected pulmonary embolism to determine whether a clot is present in the blood vessels of the lung.

CT Scan (Computerised tomographic scan): A special x-ray investigation which can be performed on any part of the body. The patient lies down on a special couch and a computer constructs slices of the body in great detail so that radiologists (doctors specialising in use of x-ray images) can look at the structure of parts of the body and see any disease affecting it.

D

DEXA Scan: A special scan which looks at the bone density and is therefore used for diagnosing osteoporosis (bone thinning).

Diffuse Parenchymal Lung Disease (DPLD): is a term used to describe a number of conditions, of which the common feature is that both lungs are widely affected with the brunt of the disease process being upon the air sacs (and not the airways). Some of these conditions are temporary and reflect an infective or inflammatory insult to the lungs, whilst others reflect an exposure to environmental or occupational agents, and some are a response to drugs given for other reasons. Sometimes, the generalised air sac disease is associated with scarring or fibrosis (special leaflets are available on this condition).

DVLA: Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority.

DVT: - Deep venous thrombosis. Blood clots forming in the lower legs usually due to immobility or associated with other diseases.

Tuberculosis (TB): An infection of the lungs, lymph nodes, waterworks or bone. The condition is cured by six months treatment with special antibiotics.

Tumour Markers: Blood tests which may sometimes suggest the presence or activity of certain types of cancers.

Tuberculin Test: A skin test which determines one's individual immunity to tuberculosis or reflects the degree of previous exposure to that disease.

V

V/Q: Terms which usually preface the word "scan" – a V/Q scan is often done to help in the diagnosis or exclusion of clots which have passed to the lung.

VATS (Video assisted thorascopic surgery): A surgical technique which allows key-hole access to the lungs and chest.

U

Uniphyllin: A tablet airway opening medicine containing the treatment known as Theophylline.

V

Ventolin: A trade name for Salbutamol.

Sinus Disease/ Sinusitis: Inflammation and infection occurring in the air spaces in the front of the face known as sinuses, which frequently gives rise to discomfort below or above the eyes and is often associated with nasal stuffiness and an awareness of phlegm dripping down at the back of the throat (catarrh).

Sleep Hygiene: A term used to describe the routines and habits associated with sleep and waking up.

Small Cell Lung Cancer: A type of lung cancer nearly always treated with chemo-therapy.

Spiriva: The trade name for a medication known as tiotropium, a once daily inhaled airway opening medicine used in the treatment of COPD.

Spirometry: See FEV /FVC. A method of testing the lung function which involves a maximal blow-out after a maximal blow-in.

Sputum cytology: The obtaining of samples of phlegm for examination under the microscope.

Squamous Cell Carcinoma: The commonest type of lung cancer.

Symbicort: A combination inhaler used in the treatment of asthma and COPD and which contains the inhaled steroid Budesonide and the long acting airway opening medication, Formoterol.

T

Thoracoscopy: A telescope test which enables the surgeon to look inside the chest cavity and which is usually performed under general anaesthetic and involves one or two small cuts in the chest wall.

Thoracotomy: The opening of the chest during an operation

Tiotropium: See 'Spiriva'

TNM: A classification system for determining whether lung cancer is localised or whether it has involved other parts of the body.

Transbronchial lung biopsies: The obtaining of samples of the lung for examination under the microscope during a bronchoscopy.

Dyspnoea: Breathlessness, shortness of breath or a feeling of inability to breathe in fully.

E

Echocardiogram: An investigation using soundwaves which looks at the shape and function of the heart valves, and assesses the heart as a muscular pump.

Emphysema: is one type or one part of COPD. It describes the situation whereby the lung air sacs have become distorted or destroyed. "Bullous" emphysema describes a particular type of emphysema where particularly large air sacs develop within the lung.

Epistaxis: Nose bleeds.

ESR (Erythrocyte Sedimentation Rate): A blood test which can show abnormally raised values in a non-specific way if there is almost any type of disease present in the body.

Erythema Nodosum: A red/bruised type of inflammation of the shins which can occur in response to simple sore throats or in association with some lung diseases such as sarcoidosis or TB.

Extrinsic Allergic Alveolitis: An uncommon abnormal inflammation of the air sacs of the lungs following exposure of some individuals to environmental factors such as mouldy hay, pigeons or cockatiels. Symptoms include coughing, breathlessness and fever.

F

FDG PET: A specialist form of imaging which as well as showing the structure of parts of the body also enables us to tell the activity of any shadow seen.

FEV /FVC: These abbreviations refer to two measurements which are made during the procedure of spirometry. This is one form of lung function test which enables the doctors to determine whether there is any airway narrowing and to measure the size of the lungs.

Fibrosing Alveolitis: One of the commonest types of diffuse parenchymal lung disease (DPLD). Occasionally occurring in association with rheumatoid arthritis, it more commonly occurs alone and for no apparent reason in men or women in their 50s, 60s or 70s (special leaflets are available on this condition).

Finger clubbing: A change in shape of the ends of the fingers and/or toes which can run in families or can be a sign of lung disease.

FNA (Fine needle aspiration biopsy): FNA refers to a procedure where samples of part of the body are obtained by inserting a needle into that part of the body and sucking out cells which can be stained in the laboratory and viewed under a microscope to help make a diagnosis.

Furosemide: A water tablet.

G

Gas transfer: This term refers to the ability of gases to pass from the air into the bloodstream, and is one test performed in the lung function laboratory.

Gastro-Oesophageal Reflux Disease: is a term used to describe the situation whereby acid flows back from the stomach into the gullet. This can give rise to heartburn and sometimes it can be a cause of unexplained coughing. The condition can arise for a number of reasons, including being overweight, and some medications may also enhance the risk of acid flowing from the stomach in the wrong direction. American web sites will refer to this condition as GERD.

H

Haemoglobin (Hb): A measurement to assess the thickness of the blood and to determine whether one is anaemic.

Haemoptysis: The coughing up of blood. This may come from the mouth, nose or lungs – in the latter case the blood often streaks the sputum or is mixed with the sputum.

Hiatus Hernia: describes a situation whereby part of the stomach slips through a weakness in the diaphragm (the main muscle which separates the chest from the abdomen). It can sometimes be seen on a chest x-ray but is often of no importance, although occasionally is associated with Gastro-Oesophageal Reflux Disease and heartburn.

HIV/AIDS: Human Immuno-Deficiency Virus/Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome. Patients with these conditions may be predisposed to unusual lung infections.

Q

QDS: A Latin abbreviation indicating that a medicine should be taken four times a day.

Quadruple Therapy: A term usually used to imply the use of four medicines simultaneously for the first two months of treatment for tuberculosis.

R

RCP score (Royal College of Physicians score): A score which is used in those with asthma to determine how well the condition has been in the last week or month.

Restrictive Lung Disease: This term describes a condition whereby the lungs are smaller than usual. This may be because there is a disease of the lung such as inflammation or scarring which causes shrinkage for example DPLD, or the lungs may be small because they are restricted in size by deformity of the chest wall, obesity or weakness of the breathing muscles.

Rifater: A combination tablet which contains three medicines used for tuberculosis and which saves patients having to take multiple, separate tablets.

S

Salbutamol: The commonest form of inhaled bronchodilator (airway opener).

Sarcoidosis/ Sarcoid: A disease of unknown cause, whereby collections of cells known as granulomata arise and these can interfere with the function of the lungs and other parts of the body. Sometimes the lymph nodes in the chest are swollen as a result of sarcoidosis and sometimes there is infiltration of the air sacs of the lungs giving rise to coughing and breathlessness. A special leaflet is available on this condition and there is a recommended website.

Serum ANCA: A blood test which is sometimes used in some inflammatory condtions of the lung.

Seretide: A combination inhaled therapy used for asthma and COPD which combines the inhaled steroid Fluticasone with the inhaled long acting airway opener, Salmeterol.

Shuttle Walk Test: A form of testing of lung function whilst walking.

Pleural Thickening: Thickening of the lining of the lung – often occurring because of an infection, or injury to the chest wall or sometimes as a result of previous exposure to asbestos.

Pneumococcus: A type of germ which can cause pneumonia.

Pneumothorax: An abnormal collection of air between the lung and the chest wall. The air has escaped from within the lung – usually spontaneously but occasionally because of investigation done in hospital where samples of the lung have been obtained. Spontaneous pneumothoraces are commoner in young, thin males and in those of either sex of any age who have underlying lung disease, especially asthma, COPD and cystic fibrosis.

Pneumonia: An infection of the air sacs of the lungs – the air sacs become filled with infected material and pneumonia can occur in previously healthy people, or occasionally pneumonia can complicate other illnesses and may develop during a hospital stay for other reasons.

Polysomnography: A detailed investigation of sleep patterns and other parameters such as breathing and movements during sleep. The test can only be performed in hospital as special sensors are connected to monitor different parts of the body as you sleep.

Post-nasal Drip: Mucous dripping from the sinuses into the back of the throat where it is often sensed as catarrh.

Postural drainage: A type of physiotherapy technique which is taught to patients with bronchiectasis to help them bring up phlegm.

Prednisolone: A steroid tablet.

PRN: A Latin abbreviation meaning that a medicine is taken as required.

Pulmonary Embolism/ Emboli: Clots in the main blood vessels in the lungs. The clots usually occur as a result of clots in the pelvis and legs breaking off and going to the lungs.

PSA (Prostate specific antigen): A test which gives some information about the possibility of diseases being present in the prostate gland.

Pyrazinamide: One form of TB medicine.

HR CT Scan (high resolution): A special form of CT scanning enabling close attention to be paid to the lung tissue.

Hypertension: Raised blood pressure. When preceded by the word 'pulmonary', 'pulmonary hypertension' implies raised blood pressure in the blood vessels leading to the heart from the lung.

Hyperventilation: Excessively rapid or deep breathing.

I

Ischaemic Heart Disease: Heart disease resulting from an inadequate blood supply to the heart muscle, usually because of narrowing of the coronary arteries or the development of blood clots within the arteries.

K

KCO: A measurement of Gas transfer (see above).

L

Lobectomy: The surgical removal of one lobe of the lung.

Lung Cancer: The commonest form of cancer in men in the U.K. and the second commonest in females. It occurs in several different forms and treatment often depends on its type, where in the lungs it is situated and how soon it caused symptoms. Special leaflets are available on this condition and there are recommended websites.

Lung Resection: The surgical removal of a portion of lung tissue.

Lung Function Tests (also known as Pulmonary Function Tests): Some of these may be undertaken by the doctor during your consultation but others involve an attendance at the lung function laboratory. These tests are usually carried out at rest and involve blowing into machines which inform us as to the normality or otherwise of the lung's functioning. Sometimes such tests are also carried out during exercise.

Lymphadenopathy: Swelling of the lymph glands.

M

MDT (Multidisciplinary team): sometimes referred to as MDT Meeting. This is a method of delivering care to people with lung diseases whereby doctors you see in the clinic discuss with specialist x-ray doctors and specialist treatment doctors, your diagnosis and how best to treat you.

Mediastinal shift: This refers to the position of the structures in the centre of your chest and if there is shift of these central structures to one side or another, this may be because they are pushed by some disease process or they move into a potential space. Mediastinal shift is evaluated on an xray and can be helpful to doctors in making a diagnosis.

Metastases: The spread of cancer from where it arose to somewhere else in the body.

Methotrexate: A strong anti-inflammatory medication used in the treatment of some lung diseases. A separate leaftlet exists for this medication.

Montelukast: A tablet therapy for the prevention of asthma (a recommended website exists which gives further information on the treatment of this condition).

MRI (Magnetic resonance imaging): A type of imaging which does not involve x-rays but uses magnetic fields. Special advice will be given to you if you are having one of these tests.

MSLT (multiple sleep latency test): A test designed to see how sleepy you are during the day. It is performed in hospital where you are given the opportunity to have five, 20 minute naps over a day.

N

Narcolepsy: A sleep disorder characterised by sudden nap attacks. Other symptoms may include paralysis and or hallucination at times of waking or going to sleep and sudden loss of muscular control triggered by amusement, anger or excitement.

Nebuliser: A machine which produces a mist of medication which can then be breathed in. There is no evidence that this method of administering medicines is any better than a standard inhaler.

Nocturnal hypoventilation: Inadequate or shallow breathing during sleep which can cause levels of the gas carbon dioxide to increase in the blood. It is sometimes caused by a chest wall deformity or obesity and people sometimes wake with a headache in the morning.

Nocturia: Waking at night to pass water.

O

Obstructive Sleep Apnoea Syndrome: A disorder of sleep where parts of the upper airway narrow or close, causing a period of not breathing, which is often terminated by a loud snore or gasping for air. When this happens repetitively, sleep is disrupted and people often wake feeling un-refreshed and can feel sleepy in the daytime. Special leaflets are available on this condition and there is a recommended website.

OD: A Latin abbreviation meaning that a medicine should be taken once daily.

Oedema: Fluid in the wrong places – hence ankle oedema or "pulmonary oedema" (fluid on the lungs).

Omeprazole: A type of anti-indigestion medicine used for heartburn and which is sometimes used in the treatment of unexplained coughing.

Oral steroids: Steroid tablets.

Orthopnoea: Breathlessness on lying flat.

Oxygen Saturation: An indirect measurement of how much oxygen there is in the bloodstream.

P

Parenchymal: In the lung substance, as opposed to the airways.

Peak Flow: A simple blowing test which is usually used to monitor those with airway diseases such as asthma.

Pleurocentesis: The draining of fluid which has collected around the lung by a needle inserted into the chest wall under local anaesthetic.

Pleural Effusion: Fluid collecting between the lungs and the chest walls. This may occur as a result of heart or liver disease or because of an illness in the lung such as an infection or inflammation or tumour.